



EXECUTIVE MEMBER DECISION

REPORT OF:	Executive Member for Finance and Governance
LEAD OFFICERS:	Director of Finance and Customer Services
DATE:	February 2020

PORTFOLIO/S AFFECTED:	Finance and Governance
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WARD/S AFFECTED:	All
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SUBJECT:	Business Rates policy changes 2020/21
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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Business Rates Local Discretionary Scheme policy has been reviewed in preparation for the 2020/21 financial year. Appropriate adjustments have been made to accommodate the reduction in budget for the Business Rates Local Discretionary Scheme.

Business Rates Local Discretionary Scheme

In the March 2017 budget a number of separate measures were announced to assist businesses that had faced increases in Business Rate bills following the revaluation of all business properties in the country; one of those measures introduced by the budget was the Local Discretionary scheme.

In line with the reduced government funding, this scheme has been reviewed to see how the 2020/21 award of £5,000 can be allocated to those businesses facing increased bills. As such, this report seeks the approval to award a discretionary discount in 2020/21 equivalent to 10% of the increase faced by those businesses that qualify for the relief. The 10% relates to the increase from 2019/20 to 2020/21.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Executive Member approves the amendments to the policy from 2020/21.

2. BACKGROUND

This report proposes policy changes in respect of the Business Rates Local Discretionary Scheme due to the reduced funding by central government.

4. KEY ISSUES & RISKS

4.1 Discretionary Business Rates relief

The Government funding for Local Discretionary Business Rates relief ends in 2020/21. It is anticipated that the reduction in the award to 10% will fully utilise the government funding without risking any financial exposure to the council.

The full policy is attached as Appendix A.

5. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The proposed changes to the Discretionary Rate Relief scheme policy is contained in the Appendix A.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The Discretionary Business Rate Relief will be fully funded by the Government based on the criteria set out in the guidance.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The Discretionary Rate Relief outlined in this report and the appendix follows the government guidance that was set out in 2017 and by using the Council's discretionary relief powers under Section 47 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 (as amended).

The policy provides transparency and show the criteria that the Council will apply when making their decisions as to whether or not to grant relief or make payments. The Council must, however, consider applications which may fall outside the policies in exceptional cases and should not be fettered in its decision-making by the terms of the policy. The Council is also bound by the legislation which also provides for limits set by the Government as to when relief grants or payments can be made.

8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Any additional work required from the changes listed in the policy documents will be undertaken within existing resources.

9. EQUALITY AND HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

Please select one of the options below. Where appropriate please include the hyperlink to the EIA.

Option 1 ☒ Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) not required – the EIA checklist has been completed.

Option 2 ☐ In determining this matter the Executive Member needs to consider the EIA associated with this item in advance of making the decision. (*insert EIA link here*)

Option 3 ☐ In determining this matter the Executive Board Members need to consider the EIA associated with this item in advance of making the decision. (*insert EIA attachment*)

10. CONSULTATIONS

None.

11. STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE

The recommendations are made further to advice from the Monitoring Officer and the Section 151 Officer has confirmed that they do not incur unlawful expenditure. They are also compliant with equality legislation and an equality analysis and impact assessment has been considered. The recommendations reflect the core principles of good governance set out in the Council's Code of Corporate Governance.

12. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

All Declarations of Interest of any Executive Member consulted and note of any dispensation granted by the Chief Executive will be recorded and published if applicable.

VERSION:	1
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CONTACT OFFICER:	Andy Ormerod
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DATE:	February 2020
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BACKGROUND PAPER:	Appendix A – Local Discretionary Relief scheme policy 2020/21
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